

REBECCA COHN eNEWSLETTER

for the twenty-fourth Assembly District

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Cohn's Comment



The state budget recently passed by the legislature is balanced, responsible and compassionate. Schools are fully funded, higher education tuition is lowered, foster children get the resources they need, our parks will get badly needed maintenance, and our debt will be paid down.

I believe we were fiscally prudent with this budget. We only use one time income for one time expenditures.

Several key areas were fully funded or investments were increased for the 2006-07 budget. They include:

Full funding for Proposition 98, including \$2 billion more for our schools than required under the Proposition 98 minimum guarantee. In addition, we increased funding for K-12 that provides for more local control and the greatest increase in Economic Impact Aid funding for low-income children and English language learners in a generation.

We also provided near full funding for equalization invested in helping high school seniors pass the exit exam.

But we didn't solely focus on K-12 education. This budget fully funds enrollment growth in all segments, decreases community college fees from \$26/unit to \$20/unit, contains no fee increases in UC and CSU tuition, fully

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Protective Order Measure to Governor, Others Progress

SACRAMENTO – Marking another success in the ongoing pursuit of reforming domestic violence laws, Assembly Member Cohn's AB 1787 – Protective Orders has passed both houses of the California State Legislature.

Clarifying current law to ensure that all protective orders are issued by a judge who has reviewed the case, the bill passed the Senate unanimously.

Protective orders are legal guidelines including restraining orders that prohibit alleged abusers and stalkers from harassing the victims. Some California counties had adopted procedures allowing law enforcement officers to issue protective orders directly, potentially jeopardizing thousands of cases.

"Emergency protective orders are, and continue to be, resources that judges use to protect victims of domestic violence," said Cohn. "AB 1787 requires that every emergency protective order be issued by a judge and guarantees that all emergency

protective orders are seen as valid and consequently more enforceable in the eyes of the court."

Several of Cohn's other bills made substantial progress in June as well, with three bills reaching the Senate Floor.

AB 120 – Physical Therapists Continuing Education:

Requires physical therapists to undergo continuing education in order to renew their licenses. This would encourage physical therapists to keep current with techniques and innovations in patient treatment. Passed Senate Appropriations 11-0. Currently on the

Senate Floor.

AB 2075 – Domestic Violence and Child Abuse: Amends/adds a subsection that would define domestic violence and child abuse as constituting the same class of crime, allowing for the consolidation of all crimes of "domestic violence". Passed Senate Public Safety 6-0.

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Cohn appears at a press conference supporting AB 2263 the "Bad Santa" bill. The measure would require sex offenders working with children to disclose their status if their job requires direct physical contact, such as department stores Santas.

High Pollution Levels Lead to Spare the Air Days

SAN JOSE – Recently the Bay Area has had three Spare the Air days, June 22, 23, and 26. Spare the Air is a government program that was instituted in 1991, providing free public transportation on days where Air Quality Index (AQI) levels are unsafe. AQI is measured by the air pollutants (ozone, carbon monoxide, particle pollution, sulfur dioxide, and

nitrogen dioxide) in an area. The highest measured amount becomes the AQI level for the day. For example, if Ozone measured at 90 and sulfur dioxide measured at 88, the AQI would be 90. There are six different levels of AQI, ranging from good to hazardous.

On days where the AQI is unhealthy,

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funds academic preparation programs at UC and CSU and provides full funding for community college equalization.

In keeping with our tradition of caring for and helping those Californians less fortunate than us, this budget contains no additional cuts to poor people. In fact, this budget contains a \$100 million investment in CalWORKs to get more people working and backfill for loss of federal funds that mitigates potential new federal sanctions.

It also has the largest investment in foster care services in years, including big improvement in the caseworker ratios to improve direct interactions with foster care youth. Major increases in funding for developmental services, particularly for employment services for persons with disabilities, are also provided.

This budget also makes a \$250 million commitment to begin addressing the backlog of deferred maintenance projects in state parks and provides major investment in ongoing parks maintenance and operations.

Simply because this budget makes large commitments to provide and care for the people and services we expect government to serve does not mean it is not a fiscally responsible budget. This budget provides a larger reserve than the governor called for and pays down more than \$3 billion in debt thus providing for a rainy day as well as saving the state hundreds of millions of dollars in interest payments.

No state budget can ever be considered perfect but this budget reflects compromises made by Democrats, Republicans and the governor. This budget is reflective of how we want to see government function, working together to solve California's complex needs.

As always, I look forward to your thoughts and comments. ♦

– Rebecca Cohn

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July Legislative Update

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Currently on the Senate Floor.

AB 2116 – Interoperability:

Creates guidelines and directs funding for communication equipment to be interoperable or to be able to work with different parts of the communications system. This would allow first responders to directly communicate with different agencies and jurisdictions. Passed the Senate Committee on Governmental Organization 5-0. Currently on the Senate Floor.

AB 44 – Cell Phone Destruction:

Increases the penalty for the destruction of or the obstruction of the use of a cell phone during an assault to one year in jail. Passed Senate Public Safety 6-0. Currently in Senate

Appropriations.

AB 96 – GPS for High Risk Sex

Offenders: Mandates minute by minute tracking of High Risk Sex Offenders from the time they are paroled to the time they register with local law enforcement. Passed Senate Public Safety 5-0. Currently in Senate Appropriations.

AB 105 – Victims' Compensation

Fund: Allows victims of sexual assault or domestic violence to draw from the Victims' Compensation Fund more than once to cover moving expenses. This applies to victims whose moves are necessary for their safety. The bill can potentially save lives as offenders often track down victims after their initial move. Passed Senate Public Safety 6-0. Currently in

Stay Safe in the Water this Summer

SAN JOSE – With summer having officially started, we expect many readers to turn to swimming pools as an escape from the heat. In light of that, here are a few tips on how to stay safe in the water:

- Learn to swim. The best thing anyone can do to stay safe in and around the water is to learn to swim. Always swim with a buddy; never swim alone. The American Red Cross has swimming courses for people of any age and swimming ability.
- Read and obey all rules and posted signs.
- Children or inexperienced swimmers should take precautions, such as wearing a U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device when around the water.
- Watch out for the dangerous "too's" – too tired, too cold, too far from safety, too much sun, too much strenuous activity.
- Set water safety rules for the whole family based on swimming abilities (for example, inexperienced swimmers should stay in water less than chest deep).
- Be knowledgeable of the

water environment you are in and its potential hazards, such as deep and shallow areas, currents, depth changes, obstructions and where the entry and exit points are located. The more informed you are, the more aware you will be of hazards and safe practices.

- Pay attention to local weather conditions and forecasts. Stop swimming at the first indication of bad weather.
- Use a feet-first entry when entering the water.
- Enter headfirst only when the area is clearly marked for diving and has no obstructions.
- Do not mix alcohol with swimming, diving or boating. Alcohol impairs your judgment, balance, and coordination, affects your swimming and diving skills, and reduces your body's ability to stay warm.
- Know how to prevent, recognize, and respond to emergencies.

For more information on water safety or to enroll in a swimming class today, please contact the local Red Cross chapter at (408) 577-1000. ♦

Senate Appropriations.

AB 2051 – LGBT Domestic

Violence: Creates a \$23 fee on individuals registering as domestic partners, similar to the current fee charged for marriage licenses. The funds would support many initiatives, including grants to shelters serving victims of LGBT domestic violence and LGBT issue sensitivity training for law enforcement and domestic violence service providers. Passed Senate Health 5-4. Awaiting hearing in Senate Judiciary.

For information on these or any other of Assembly Member Cohn's bills, contact Richard Woonacott at (916) 319-2024 or Richard.Woonacott@asm.ca.gov. ♦

Mentoring Helps Children and the Community

SAN JOSE – In the United States, there are approximately 5 million “latchkey kids” - young people who return to a home after school without any supervision. The juvenile crime rate triples between the hours of 3 PM and 6 PM in part due to no adults available to watch these kids, according to the National Mentoring Partnership (www.mentoring.org). A proven deterrent to this particular sort of crime is youth mentoring, which pairs up concerned adults with at-risk youths. July has been recognized as National Mentoring Month by the President of the United States.

Mentoring is not an expensive or time-consuming task to undertake.

All it requires is the willingness to forge a relationship with your mentee. Volunteers usually pledge about four hours a month with their young person when involved in the Big Brothers, Big Sisters organization. According to the NMP, mentoring involves any activity where a young person and adult establish a connection, including pizza dinners, helping with homework, attending concerts, or driving around discussing good music.

There are many ways to get involved with young people, from inquiring at your place of worship, local school, or community organization to taking a young relative

or friend’s child under your wing. Another way is through Big Brothers, Big Sisters (BBBS). Around for more than a century, BBBS (<http://www.bbbsa.org>) is the most well-known mentorship program in the U.S. After an easy application process involving at least two references and a background check, BBBS employs a system to match you up with a young person who not only needs a friend, but shares your own interests.

Mentoring is a wonderful way to help today’s youth. By helping to keep kids out of trouble, not only do young people benefit but so does your local community. ♦

Nighttime Fuel-Ups, Better BBQing Lead to Cleaner Air

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they become Spare the Air days. Here are some methods to spare the air:

Drive Less! – Cars are the leading source of air pollution. Spare the air by walking or biking if possible.

Take Public Transportation – 80% of Santa Clara County residents are located within a quarter mile of a transit route, and can go virtually anywhere in the Bay Area. Visit 511.org to help you plan your trip by clicking Trip Planner on the site.

Carpool to Work – Save money by riding with your co-workers to work. It’s also a great way to build relationships.

Telecommute – If possible, try working from home. This saves you money and helps the environment.

Rating	Air Quality Index
Good	0-50
Moderate	51-100
Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups	101-150
Unhealthy	151-200
Very Unhealthy	201-250
Harzardous	251-300

Refuel in the Evening – Putting gas in your vehicle releases Volatile Organic Compound (VOCs), which mix with oxides of nitrogen and cook in the sun forming ground level ozone. Put off refueling until the nighttime to help cut down pollution.

Avoid consumer spray products – Over 50 tons of pollution daily comes from spray products. That’s more VOCs than oil refineries! Switch to sticks, solids and gels to help out the environment.

Barbeque, but DON’T USE LIGHTER FLUID – Fluid gets burned into smoke, causing a half-ton of smog each day in the Bay Area. Try electric or chimney briquette starters instead...they work faster too!

Do garden chores gasoline free – Gas powered tools across the Bay Area produce as much pollution as 40 cars. On Spare the Air days, put chores off till the air clears up, or just use those old-fashioned hand powered tools.

By using these tips, you’ll feel better, save the environment and have more money. To find out more on the Spare the Air program and receive alerts about upcoming Spare the Air days, visit www.sparetheair.org or call 1- 800 HELP-AIR (435-7247). ♦



Deputy Luong of the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Department and Assembly Member Cohn talk to children and parents about encountering strangers.

Stranger Danger Camp Recap

SAN JOSE – Continuing the outreach program that has visited every neighborhood in the 24th Assembly District, Assembly Member Cohn brought Stranger Danger Camp to Willow Glen. Over 250 people attended the camp throughout the day. The Santa Clara County District Attorney’s office brought their digital fingerprinting machine to help create identifications kits for parents to take home. The kits also included DNA swabs and digital photographs. Over 100 children were fingerprinted, swabbed and photographed during the faire.

For more information contact Julie Lind at (408) 282-8920 or Julie.Lind@asm.ca.gov. ♦